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DOS Review Completed.

T O P S E C R E T 252115Z OCT 72 SENSITIVE EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY
VIA BUNKER CHANNEL

FM: HENRY A. KISSINGER
TO: AMBASSADOR BUNKER
CITE: WHS2298

DELIVER IMMEDIATELY OPENING OF BUSINESS

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
 INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

OCTOBER 25, 1972

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SAIGON 0234 AND 0235. I AGREE COMPLETELY THAT THE HANOI LEG SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED AT THIS TIME FOR THE VERY REASONS YOU CITE. REFERENCE YOUR SAIGON 0235, IT IS OF COURSE ESSENTIAL THAT THIEU COMES TO UNDERSTAND THAT CONTINUATION OF HIS INTRANSIGENT POSITION, WHICH WILL ISOLATE HIM AS THE SOLE OBSTACLE TO PEACE, IS NOTHING SHORT OF SUICIDAL. HE MUST ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS TOTAL UNANIMITY WITHIN THE U.S. CABINET THAT THE GENERAL OUTLINES OF THE AGREEMENT WE HAVE NOW OBTAINED FROM HANOI ARE FAIR AND PROVIDE FOR THE KINDS OF SAFEGUARDS NECESSARY TO PREVENT A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER. THUS, SHOULD THE NEGOTIATIONS BREAK DOWN BECAUSE OF THIEU'S OBSTINACY, THERE WILL BE ABSOLUTELY NO HOPE OF CONTINUING U.S. MILITARY OR ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO SOUTH VIETNAM. FINALLY, THIEU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT WE WILL DO OUR UTMOST TO OBTAIN HANOI'S ACCEPTANCE OF AS MANY AS POSSIBLE OF THE MODIFICATIONS HE HAS PROPOSED.

THE PRESIDENT WANTS YOU TO KEEP WORKING ON THIEU PERSISTENTLY, PERHAPS SEEING HIM EVERY OTHER DAY IN AN EFFORT TO INSURE THAT HE NEVER LOSES SIGHT OF THE INEVITABLE OF CONTINUING INTRANSIGENCE.

IF HANOI AGREES, WE WILL MEET AGAIN IN PARIS DURING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 29. AS A RESULT OF YOUR EFFORTS, HOPEFULLY, THIEU WILL BE PREPARED BY NOVEMBER 15 TO ACCEPT THE FINAL PROPOSAL WHICH BY THEN SHOULD HAVE BEEN MODIFIED TO BRING IT IN CLOSER CONFORMANCE WITH AT LEAST THE COSMETIC CHANGES HE HAS RECOMMENDED. I HOPE TO SEND THE FINAL PROPOSAL TO YOU BY NOVEMBER 8.

IT WOULD BE WISHFUL THINKING TO EXPECT MUCH MOVEMENT FROM HANOI ON EITHER THE POLITICAL OR THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL ISSUES. THIEU SHOULD BE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS THAT HE CAN EXPECT A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE AGREEMENT AS NOW DRAFTED. FOR HIM TO CONCENTRATE AT THIS JUNCTURE ON DEVELOPING ALTERNATE PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD CHANGE ITS OVERALL FRAMEWORK IS BOTH IMPRACTICAL AND WILL SERVE TO DIVERT HIS ATTENTION FROM THE KIND OF PREPARATORY ACTIONS HE SHOULD ALREADY HAVE UNDER WAY. EFFORTS BY THIEU TO DEVELOP ALTERNATE PEACE PROPOSALS CAN ONLY HAVE THE CONSEQUENCE OF FORCING A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE TWO OF US. WE WILL UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, ACCEPT SUCH PROPOSALS. ODDLY ENOUGH, THIEU SEEMS TO BELIEVE HE CAN PROCEED THIS WAY

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BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER 7, WE ARE POSED WITH A MOST DELICATE PROBLEM. BEFORE NOVEMBER 7, WE CANNOT BRUTALIZE THIEU TO THE POINT THAT HE WILL KICK OVER THE TRACES AND UNDERTAKE A PUBLIC CONFRONTATION AND BREAK WITH US. WE SHOULD, HOWEVER, IMPRESS UPON HIM THE IMPRACTICALITY OF HIS FAILING TO PLAN FOR THE CONTINGENCY OF ULTIMATELY HAVING TO ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT ALONG THE LINES WHICH HAVE BEEN CURRENTLY WORKED OUT. THEREFORE, IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THIEU YOU SHOULD IMPRESS UPON HIM THE URGENT NEED TO PLAN INTENSIVELY FOR THE CONTINGENCY OF A CEASE-FIRE IN PLACE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE AND PERHAPS AS SOON AS MID-NOVEMBER. CONCURRENTLY, AND ALSO IN THE CONTINGENCY CONTEXT, WE SHOULD MOVE JOINTLY TO INSURE THAT THE EXPEDITED FLOW OF EQUIPMENT AND MATERIEL IS UNDERTAKEN SO THAT THE ADDITIONAL MATERIEL WILL BE IN SOUTH VIETNAM BY MID-NOVEMBER. WE HAVE INSTRUCTED DEFENSE AND STATE TO PROCEED WITH THE SHIPMENTS, WITH GENERAL ABRAMS SERVING AS THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE'S AND THE PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE AGENT IN THE THEATER. IN PRESSING THIEU VIGOROUSLY TO PROCEED WITH THIS KIND OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING, YOU SHOULD AT THE SAME TIME MAKE IT VERY CLEAR TO HIM THAT HE MAY BE FACED WITH ABSOLUTELY NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ACCEPT THE BROAD OUTLINES OF THE CURRENT PROPOSAL. YOU WILL HAVE TO EMPLOY A DEGREE OF VIGOR WHICH IS STRONG ENOUGH TO STRIP HIM OF HIS CURRENT ILLUSIONS BUT AT THE SAME TIME AVOID FORCING HIM TO KICK OVER THE TRACES AND BREAK PUBLICLY WITH US BEFORE NOVEMBER 7. AFTER NOVEMBER 7, FULL LEVERAGE WILL BE APPLIED.

I BELIEVE OUR BEST TACTIC IN DEALING WITH THIEU IS FOR YOU TO MEET WITH HIM REPEATEDLY BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER 8 SO THAT MY NEXT MEETING WITH HIM CAN BE FINAL. HE MUST KNOW BEFORE THAT MEETING THAT HE IS EITHER GOING TO JOIN WITH US AS A PARTNER IN ACCEPTING THE CURRENT PROPOSAL MODIFIED TO THE DEGREE THAT IT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE TO DO SO OR WE WILL PROCEED WITHOUT HIM. AT MY MEETING WITH HIM, IF NECESSARY, WE CAN UNEQUIVOCALLY INFORM THIEU THAT WE WILL PROCEED WITHOUT HIM WITH ALL OF THE GRIEVOUS CONSEQUENCES THAT THIS HOLDS FOR HIM.

WARM REGARDS.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE **EXCLUSIVE EYES ONLY**